

A birthday surprise by honeyflowers

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Summary:

Jonathan decides to bake a cake for Nancy's birthday, but things don't go to plan.

A birthday surprise

Author's Note:

This was based off a prompt I found on Tumblr. I'm not totally happy with how it turned out, but this is my first fanfic, so we'll see how it goes. Any feedback or constructive criticism is much appreciated!

Dedicated to the Jonathan defence squad, I love you all :)

Jonathan sighed, pulling on his sweater.

It was a sunny Saturday afternoon. His mom was at work, finally giving in to her son's persuasion and taking the extra shift she had been offered to do earlier that week. It would earn them some extra money, and they would perhaps be able to afford that meal out at the restaurant in town they had been wanting to go to ever since it opened.

Today was also Nancy's birthday. She had went out with her mom that morning to run errands, but she had promised her boyfriend that she would drop by his house for a few hours that afternoon. Given that he would be home alone for most of the day, Jonathan had planned to surprise Nancy with a cake. It wasn't anything special, but he hoped that the thought would count.

Unfortunately, Jonathan had never really been good at baking. He often cooked meals for his family, and Will had become particularly fond of his brother's scrambled eggs and toast, which had become a traditional Byers' breakfast over the years. But, much to his dismay, Jonathan learned that he didn't quite have the same knack for cakes. After almost burning down their kitchen on Will's tenth birthday, Joyce had gently told her older son that a shop-bought cake would have saved him the trouble.

Today, though, Jonathan was desperate to give it another shot. He knew that Nancy loved chocolate cake, and so he was sure that she would adore the surprise.

After a quick trip to the library, he returned home with a stack of recipe books, determined to successfully bake something. Pulling out several bowls, trays and an assortment of cutlery, Jonathan began to flick through one of the books whilst anxiously checking his watch. He still had some time left - if he got it done reasonably quickly, he could have the cake iced and ready for Nancy to arrive.

Eventually, after skimming through most of the book, Jonathan found a simple chocolate cake recipe that would supposedly only take around ten minutes to prepare. Scanning the page, he began shuffling around the kitchen, gathering all of the ingredients he needed.

"Two cups of flour," he mumbled, fumbling around in one of the cupboards. Pulling out a rather crumpled up bag of flour, he carefully measured out the required amounts and emptied them into a bowl.

"One and a half cups of sugar..."

Frowning, Jonathan stumbled around the kitchen, trying to remember where his mom had placed the bag when she was baking an apple crumble last weekend. Not paying attention to where he was going, he tripped over the leg of a chair and fell face first into the bowl of flour, which dropped to the ground with a clatter.

Cursing under his breath, Jonathan slowly got up, trying to brush the flour out of his hair. After a lot of groaning, mumbling and sighs of frustration, he eventually managed to get all of the ingredients mixed together in the bowl without too much difficulty.

Setting the tray onto the counter, he poured the mixture in, trying to keep his hands steady so that he didn't spill a drop. Carefully, he opened the oven door and slid the tray in, before pushing it shut and moving onto preparing the icing.

After stirring the ingredients together, Jonathan realised that the icing was much too runny, but there wasn't a lot of time left before Nancy was due to arrive. Hurriedly, he tried to make it somewhat thicker by pouring some more sugar into the bowl, but after mixing it in with the spoon, the icing began to turn lumpy and rather watery.

Groaning, Jonathan checked his watch again and mumbled a string of

curse words - he had forgotten to take the cake out of the oven, and was now becoming very aware of a familiar burning smell that was filling the kitchen. Slipping on the oven gloves lying on the counter, he ran over and pulled the now very burnt cake out onto the table.

It looked like a disaster. Jonathan put his head in his hands, knowing that he'd done an awful job. He couldn't even follow a straightforward recipe without messing it up, and Nancy was due to walk in any minute. For a moment, he considered driving to the nearest store and buying a premade cake so that he'd at least have something to present to his girlfriend, but there was no chance he would make it back in time.

Sighing, Jonathan knew that he was going to have to attempt to salvage the cake somehow. Gently, he carried the tray over to the counter and slid it out onto a plate, before taking out a spatula and clumsily spreading the runny icing over the cake.

A loud knocking on the door startled him. Dropping his spatula, Jonathan panicked and lifted the plate up, stumbling over his feet and almost losing his balance.

"Is everything okay?"

The door opened and Nancy walked into the house, her eyebrows furrowed. "I heard a lot of noise, I thought you might've fallen over or something."

She caught sight of Jonathan, who was standing in the middle of the kitchen with the burnt cake in his hands. Taking in his appearance, she couldn't help but smile when she saw his flour-coated sweater and the remnants of chocolate icing smeared across his face.

"I, uh, tried to make you a cake, but I stuffed it up and couldn't get anything to go right and I really just wanted to surprise you with something nice, I'm sorry..." Jonathan muttered under his breath, shuffling his feet.

Nancy walked up to him, grinning from ear to ear. "You dork. You didn't need to bake anything for me, I would've been happy enough to spend time with you," she said softly.

"You love chocolate cake, though," Jonathan said, blushing. "I wanted to at least give you something nice, since it's your birthday."

Nancy smiled at him before reaching up to give him a gentle kiss on the cheek. "Hey, I'm sure the cake didn't turn out horribly. We can always try a slice, right?"

Jonathan gave her a weak smile and pulled her into an embrace, kissing her forehead. "Yeah, I suppose so," he mumbled happily.